



ENERGY STAR Award for Excellence in Home Improvement

Austin Energy

Austin, Texas

Austin Energy, the municipal utility of Austin, TX, has been an ENERGY STAR partner since 2001, promoting qualified products and services like duct sealing, and, more recently, Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. The utility now has more than 60 participating contractors focusing on whole-house energy-efficiency improvements under the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR umbrella, including duct sealing and repair, insulation, windows, and heating and cooling equipment. Through its program, more than 1,300 homes made energy-efficiency improvements in 2004, with an average savings per customer of \$268 per year. Austin Energy achieved these results through a variety of impressive initiatives, including an easy-to-access loan that makes it convenient for consumers to make their energy-efficiency improvements; contractor training; quality-control inspections; and promotional efforts including direct mail, newspaper co-op advertising, utility bill newsletters, home shows, billboards, and community events. Austin Energy found that more than 60 percent of the participation in its Home Performance with ENERGY STAR initiative is derived through direct mail, with business reply cards used as the main response vehicle. These cards serve as customer lead cards for participating companies. The remaining third of its customers visit the company's Web site. Austin Energy will use this information to further improve the delivery of these highly cost-effective, energy-efficiency improvements.



Wisconsin Focus on Energy

Madison, Wisconsin

Wisconsin Focus on Energy has played a key role in transforming the market for energy-efficient existing homes in Wisconsin. Through 2004, nearly 2,000 homes have been improved using the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, almost half in the past year. In addition, consumers now can access the program statewide. Remodeling companies are seeing the value of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, as the number of participating firms almost doubled, and the number of participating contractors has grown by 50 percent. Wisconsin's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program develops and trains a network of skilled building science professionals on consumer marketing and outreach. The program relies on a Home Performance consultant who evaluates the home, writes a detailed report, and recommends the appropriate qualified contractor to make the improvements. Once the improvements are completed, the consultant returns to the home to perform an inspection and performance testing to verify the results. Homeowners are assured of quality work, and they appreciate the unbiased third-party verification and performance testing. Wisconsin's marketing and outreach activities have helped an estimated 2 million people learn about the program. The program has used consumer brochures and the Web site, trade show promotion, co-op advertising, contractor sales manuals, and other promotional materials including yard signs—all of which prominently feature ENERGY STAR.





ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year— Excellence in Efficient Homes

Astoria Homes

Las Vegas, Nevada



Astoria Homes, a locally owned homebuilder in the Las Vegas market, built 975 ENERGY STAR homes in 2004, and has built 100 percent of its homes according to ENERGY STAR guidelines since 2000. Astoria Homes' philosophy is to build the highest quality homes at the best price by offering "More for Your Money." Building 100 percent ENERGY STAR homes represents "More Quality and More Savings" for the individual while protecting the environment. Astoria Homes uses the ENERGY STAR logo in all sales collateral and in its ads, signs, billboards, Web site, and direct mail pieces. Point-of-sale materials illustrate the features and benefits of ENERGY STAR. In addition, Astoria's sales agents are regularly trained on the ENERGY STAR features and benefits. Astoria also has been instrumental in the Nevada ENERGY STAR Partners group.

Cambridge Homes

Altamonte Springs, Florida



Cambridge Homes was established in 1991 and has grown to become the eighth largest privately held company in central Florida. In 2004 Cambridge qualified more than 550 homes as ENERGY STAR. Cambridge is committed to building 100 percent of its homes to meet ENERGY STAR guidelines, and in 2005 the company will build in 22 communities with projected sales of 750 homes. ENERGY STAR is an important part of the company's marketing strategy and is promoted as a key difference that distinguishes a Cambridge home. Cambridge displays the ENERGY STAR logo in all model homes, advertising, collateral materials, and public relations efforts. The company's ENERGY STAR Benefits Checklist details important reasons to buy, including reduced utility bills, healthier air, a more comfortable, quiet home, and environmental protection. Cambridge helps its homebuyers with efficient products as well: 23 percent of its buyers purchased ENERGY STAR qualified dishwashers and 5 percent purchased ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerators. Cambridge sold a total of \$90,000 in ENERGY STAR appliance upgrades in 2004.

D.R. Horton, Inc. - Sacramento Division

Fort Worth, Texas



The Sacramento Division of D.R. Horton, Inc., embraced ENERGY STAR in an effort to "do the right thing and do the thing right," striving to provide homeowners with a home that is more durable and more energy efficient with improved indoor air quality. D.R. Horton committed to building 100 percent of its homes to meet ENERGY STAR guidelines. In Sacramento, 1,200 D.R. Horton homes have earned the ENERGY STAR label, with more than half of these delivered in 2004. Each D.R. Horton model home has a room devoted to showing and describing the ENERGY STAR features, which include qualified lighting, HVAC equipment, windows, and appliances as either standard items or options. The company's homes have appeared in newscasts on the local affiliates of three major networks.



David Powers Homes

Houston, Texas

David Powers Homes was one of the first home builders in Houston to become an ENERGY STAR builder and commit to building 100 percent of its homes to ENERGY STAR levels. In 2004, 429 David Powers Homes earned the ENERGY STAR label. David Powers Homes is successfully delivering efficient, quality homes and in 2004 received the highest possible rating for quality of workmanship and materials in the J.D. Power Houston Home Survey. President David Powers believes ENERGY STAR played a key role in securing this rating. "ENERGY STAR adds a lot of credibility to our building program," he says, "and by constantly exceeding the requirements, David Powers Homes is able to achieve a significant competitive advantage. We truly value our partnership with ENERGY STAR." Since becoming an ENERGY STAR Partner, David Powers Homes has seen a 57-percent increase in new home sales, a 60-percent increase in traffic into model homes, and a 43-percent increase in Realtor co-op sales. David Powers Homes is a leader in an important sea change in Houston. "Before ENERGY STAR, we rarely had buyers ask about energy efficiency," Powers add, "and now they walk in the door asking if we are an ENERGY STAR builder, or they come to us because we are an ENERGY STAR builder."



Veridian Homes

Madison, Wisconsin

Veridian Homes, the largest builder in Wisconsin to commit to building all of its homes to ENERGY STAR levels, built 560 homes in 2004. ENERGY STAR is an essential part of Veridian's overall commitment to the environment, as each of its homes meets both ENERGY STAR and green construction guidelines. The company prominently features ENERGY STAR in advertising messages, newspaper and magazine ads, radio spots, Web site material, direct mail, brochures, and press kits. Veridian also works with a regional retailer to promote ENERGY STAR appliances to its homebuyers. The company provides ongoing education through employee "Lunch & Learns," sales team seminars, team meetings, and vendor training. In addition, in 2004, Veridian conducted four new home seminars for prospective homebuyers, with energy efficiency and green building principles among the key topics. Veridian says it receives fewer draft and insulation callbacks and achieves overall greater profitability by delivering efficient, quality homes.





Energy Sense

Houston, Texas



Energy Sense, an energy services company that provides a variety of marketing, inspection/rating, and contracting services to builders, homeowners, and utilities, has played a key role in transforming the market for new housing in Houston. After signing its first builder contract in June 2001, which included 500 homes, the company certified 14,000 ENERGY STAR qualified homes in 2004, representing nearly 50 percent of new home starts in the greater Houston area. Energy Sense works with builders and their sub-contractors to ensure that they have a full understanding of the value of being an ENERGY STAR builder. They provide program-specific technical training on ENERGY STAR to sales staff, superintendents, HVAC and insulation contractors, and realtors. Energy Sense also played a key role in helping establish ENERGY STAR as a method for code compliance in Texas, resulting in widespread acceptance of ENERGY STAR among builders.

Guaranteed Watt Saver Systems - West, Inc.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Guaranteed Watt Saver Systems - West, Inc. (GWSSI), a company specializing in energy-efficiency engineering and building science consulting, has worked with ENERGY STAR for more than 6 years. In 2004 builders working with GWSSI committed to build more than 6,000 ENERGY STAR qualified homes. The company has worked with more than 300 builders in Texas alone. Since its inception, GWSSI's business model has focused on helping builders and homeowners achieve a higher standard of energy efficiency through ENERGY STAR. As the first rating provider in Oklahoma and Texas, GWSSI has been instrumental in building two of the largest markets for ENERGY STAR qualified new homes in the country: Houston and Dallas. In addition to providing home energy ratings, the company conducts other activities like technical training, recruiting, marketing and outreach, and program evaluation. GWSSI's achievements include organizing the first EPA advertising co-op for ENERGY STAR homes in San Antonio, achieving full-scale deployment of ENERGY STAR promotional products by distributing them in more than 30 states; and being instrumental in developing the San Antonio market, where the company expects to rate more than 1,500 homes in 2005. GWSSI reports that ENERGY STAR has had a positive impact on its bottom line: in the past year, revenue, certified houses, the number of inspections performed, and the number of builders signed have all increased. In addition, GWSSI has averaged 71-percent growth each year over the past 4 years, and the company expects this growth to continue.